



Nancy Pelosi
Speaker

January 16, 2019

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On January 3rd, it was my privilege as Speaker to invite you to deliver the State of the Union address on January 29th. The Constitution calls for the President to “from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union.” During the 19th Century and up until the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, these annual State of the Union messages were delivered to Congress in writing. And since the start of modern budgeting in Fiscal Year 1977, a State of the Union address has never been delivered during a government shutdown.

In September 2018, Secretary Nielsen designated State of the Union Addresses as National Special Security Events (NSSEs), recognizing the need for “the full resources of the Federal Government to be brought to bear” to ensure the security of these events. The extraordinary demands presented by NSSEs require weeks of detailed planning with dozens of agencies working together to prepare for the safety of all participants.

The U.S. Secret Service was designated as the lead federal agency responsible for coordinating, planning, exercising, and implementing security for National Special Security Events by Public Law 106-544, December 19, 2000. However, both the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Homeland Security have not been funded for 26 days now – with critical departments hamstrung by furloughs.

Sadly, given the security concerns and unless government re-opens this week, I suggest that we work together to determine another suitable date after government has re-opened for this address or for you to consider delivering your State of the Union address in writing to the Congress on January 29th.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Nancy Pelosi
NANCY PELOSI
Speaker of the House